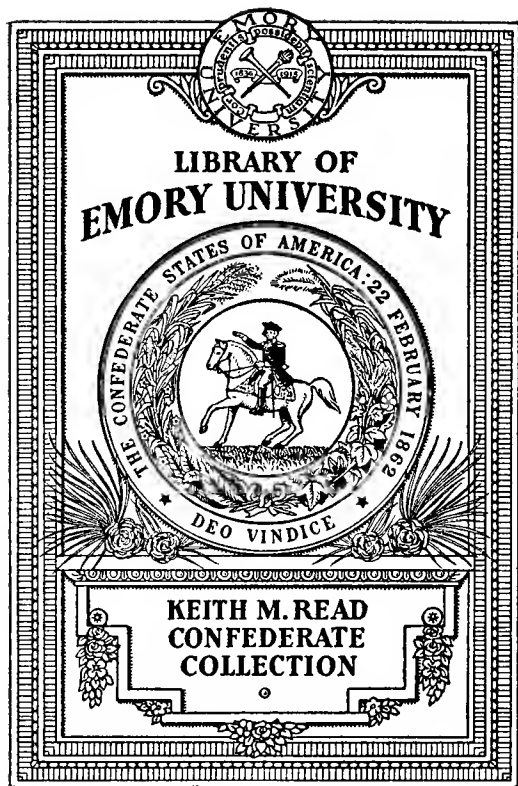


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FIGHT OF FAITH.

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THE FIGHT OF FAITH.

There is scarcely an employment of human life, which the Holy Spirit has not used to enforce lessons of Heavenly Wisdom. The fisherman is taught "to catch men;" the sower is taught to sow "the good seed of the kingdom;" the vine-dresser reminds us of Him, who "purgeth the branch that it may bring forth more fruit;" the merchant suggests to us him, who "seeking goodly pearls," obtained "the pearl of great price;" while the soldier is associated with the "Fight of Faith." Our country has been invaded, and thousands of citizens are transformed into soldiers. You are a patriot warrior, contending for the purity of your homes, and the sanctity of your altars. Leaving the endeared family circle, you have thrown yourself manfully into the struggle.

The camp has witnessed your endurance, and the field your prowess. Bethel has baptized the invader with blood, and Manassas has echoed with his retreating footsteps. Your course in *this* contest is approved of conscience, applauded of men, and favored by God. But what kind of a soldier are you in that moral contest, of which the world is the battle-field? Do you not know that there is a warfare going on between light and darkness, good and evil, God and Satan, and that this warfare transcends all human struggles? The

forces engaged are greater, the battle-field more extended, and the issues incomparably more important. Satan heads the legions of darkness, Jesus Christ leads the hosts of Heaven, the conflict waxes warm, and the prize is the sovereignty of the Universe. In this contest you can't remain indifferent; will you be found on the side of God or the Devil? "Choose you this day whom you will serve." Taking the side of Satan, you array yourself with your enemies, and against your best interests. You are sure of defeat, for you fight against God, and when a chained captive, you will have the bitter thought, "I have aided in riveting my own fetters." By forsaking sin, and trusting in Jesus for salvation, you enlist in this warfare on the side of God, and His Christ; you enter the ranks of your friends in the "Fight of Faith," and you are assured of the victor's triumph, and the conqueror's crown. Let me kindly urge you, to take God's side in the "Fight of Faith," by a few important considerations:

1st. *You have terrible enemies.* In this moral contest, you must participate, and your enemies are numerous and powerful. In our national struggle, there are traitors in our midst, who sometimes pollute our homes. So in this moral strife, there are enemies *within* us, who constantly desolate our hearts. Pride, lust, envy, jealousy, hatred, revenge, malice; these are the things that defile a man. These are the fierce foes within us, which destroy our peace, and fill the soul with the graves of its better feelings. But we have implacable *enemies without* us. All wicked men are at enmity with God, and against the interests of our souls.

Worldly pursuits come to us, claiming the homage of our hearts, stifling the convictions of conscience, and rendering us idolaters. Pleasure, Satan's fairest seducer, comes with winning countenance, pressing to our lips her enchanting cup, and whispering in our ears, "eat, drink, for to-morrow we die." Lust comes, with hideous form, saying "stolen waters are sweet," and persuading us to "sell our birthright for a mess of pottage." Ambition approaches with haughty mein, and pointing to lofty eminences of power and grandeur, says, "All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Mammon draws near, with Shylock features, and stealthy tread, whispering, "Be my disciple, and thou mayst have the chief seat in the temple of the money changers." All these objects, which allure our hearts, are at war with our peace, and would prevent our enlisting in the "Fight of Faith." But not only have we foes in the heart, and in the world: we are surrounded by invisible spiritual enemies. The Apostle says, "We wrestle not against flesh, and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places." "Your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour." Satan is called in Scripture, "the god of this world," and has much to do with its affairs. When our Saviour was upon earth, we have direct proof that much human suffering was caused by the immediate agency of evil spirits. They produced deafness, dumbness, convulsions, and insanity, besides enticing their victims to commit wickedness. We have no reason to believe that their influence has diminished with the

lapse of time. They are superior to us in subtlety and power, and are striving to compass our destruction. Should you not enlist under the banner of Him who only can protect you from such dread foes?

2d. In this moral contest, *you may be conquered*. There are no neutrals in this warfare, if not on the side of Christ, you are in the ranks of Satan. The Saviour says, "He that is not with me is against me." If against Christ you are sure of defeat, for "He shall reign till he has put all enemies under His feet." What prospect of victory or advantage have you on the Devil's side? Jesus Christ, with the resources of the universe at his command, opposes you. Cast yourself against the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler, and like the insect, striking the brazen shield, you but destroy your own life. Besides, remaining an impenitent sinner, you have no real friends in this contest. God and His people you refuse to have as friends, while those for whom you fight are your worst enemies. If it were possible for Satan and his hosts ultimately to triumph, you would be his slave and he would glory in your downfall. Occupying the position of a sinner, unreconciled to God, the hosts of heaven and the legions of hell are alike against you. Standing alone against a universe in arms, may you not be conquered? Is your own strength sufficient to cope with the world, the flesh, the Devil, and Jehovah? Alas! you often strive in vain against the evil feelings of your own heart. How frequently has the flood-tide of passion, drowning with its roar the voice of conscience and obscuring with its waves the beacons of duty, hurled you upon the rocky

shores of transgression. You may be conquered, and, if so, you become a hopeless captive. There is no exchange of prisoners in this warfare, for the simple reason, that the prisoners are all held on one side. Satan can never keep the soldiers of the cross, for they are always rescued by the Captain of their salvation, while the former and his followers are to be held in chains of darkness forever. Picture to yourself a captive in the bottomless pit. Its dungeons never open, its chains are never sundered, its keepers never sleep, its prisoners never escape. Would you avoid such a doom?

3d. Then *you can be victorious*. The hope of success always nerves the soul for conflict. On the field of Manassas, when pressed by overwhelming numbers, the brave General Bee exclaimed, "They are beating us back." But presently each soldier's heart throbbed with a new emotion, each arm was nerved with ten-fold power, and each eye kindled with the light of triumph. A fresh brigade of comrades had come to the rescue, and, assured of victory, the weary became vigorous, and the doubting firm. Forsake sin, trust in Christ, enlist in the "Fight of Faith," be a Christian, and you are assured of victory over all enemies, by a God that can not lie. Does the Divine law denounce its penalties against you? Becoming a follower of Christ, "He has redeemed you from the curse of the law." Do the evil passions of your nature destroy your peace of mind? Jesus Christ saves His people not only from the penalty, but also from the power of sin. "He saves His people from their sins," and He saves them, "not by works of

righteousness which we have done, but by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Does the world vex with its cares and ensnare with its allurements? "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." Does Satan beguile you with his arts or harass you with temptations? "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil," remembering that the follower of Christ is "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." You can triumph, and how blessed it will be to become a victor in the fight of faith. How blessed it will be, when hell, sin, death and the grave are vanquished foes, to hear the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." How delightful it will be to pass from the battle-fields of earth to the paradise of God, there to hold sweet converse with the soldiers of the cross that have gone before. How glorious, life's labor done, its warfare accomplished, to sing the song of the redeemed, and wear the crown of the ransomed. This unspeakable blessedness can be yours. Will you march under the banner of the Lion of the tribe of Judah? In plain language, will you be a Christian? May you so choose that your dying pæan shall be that of Paul, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

[Chas. H. Wynne, Printer.

